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It's about giving, saving and remembering

By John McKay and Adam Liegeot

Saving lives was the theme of the day at the 1st Annual Janis Nome Organ Donation Education Day held at DAS on April 29.

Approximately 100 state employees signed up throughout the day to give blood and become organ donors. Lt. Governor Jodi Rell stopped by to thank DAS for taking the lead on such a vital issue. Rell made it a point to chat with the Nome family members, as well as to speak with DAS' very own organ donor-donee team, Jeanne Gray and Ray Bailey.

Gray's retelling of the events leading up to and following her kidney donation to Bailey captivated a jam-packed room of onlookers and reporters. She said that when she lost her mother to cancer in 1998, "There was never a time when I felt less powerful. I felt empty." After that devastating loss, Gray made a promise to spare someone else from that pain. By donating her kidney to Bailey, she kept her promise. "It was the most rewarding thing I've ever done in my life," Gray said.

Gray related some humorous and not so humorous anecdotes from how it all began from a conversation at the microwave to complications following surgery. "Which is important to note. There are risks involved and it's important to educate yourself and ask questions. I knew there were risks, and was willing to take them, and I would do it all again in a heartbeat," Gray said.

Bailey said he could never adequately thank Gray, but that he tries to show his gratitude on a daily basis by getting



Deputy Commissioner Alan Mazzola, Commissioner Barbara Waters, Ray Bailey, Jeanne Gray, Lt. Governor Jodi Rell, Gregg Nome, Diane Nome Roach at Donor Education Day in memory of Janis Nome.

healthier and healthier. He's dropped 35 pounds, works out 3 to 4 times a week, and plays basketball with his nieces, not to mention his sprints up and down the halls of the State Office Building. "I thank Jeanne by living life to the fullest," Bailey said. "I don't want to waste one minute of it."

Bailey voiced his deep appreciation for Commissioner Barbara Waters for all her assistance before and after the transplant. "Without her support, I wouldn't be here," he said. He added that another DAS employee provided him with crucial support when he really needed it: Janis Nome.

Nome's brother Gregg was there along with her sister, Diane Roach and two daughters. "This day is so important because so many people die every year waiting for a transplant. I've seen the suffering my sister went through. I just hope no other family has to go through this - - to lose a sister and a daughter when they could be saved," Roach said.

Janis' 12-year old niece Jennifer Roach summed up the day by telling a TV reporter, "If you have the opportunity to save a life, you should take it. And you can do it by just signing a card. It's that easy."

Inside this Issue



ERP Kick-off

2



Kudos

3

Also Inside...

Up Close with Barbara Jenec

5

Nurse of the Year

6

Suitcases for Kids

7

Auctions

7

Taste of DAS

8

Employee Recognition Kickoff... Life's a Beach!



By John McKay

Nothing says a day at the beach more than lemonade, saltwater taffy and chips (Cape Cod, of course!). That was the timely theme of this season's Employee Recognition Awards (ERP) kick-off party as employees gear up for the long Memorial Day weekend and the official start of summer.

As folks munched away, they were treated to a slide show of past ERP winners' days in the sun. But the real draw was the door prize of a beach chair, mystery novel, suntan lotion and a host of other beach-going accoutrements to make any surf-lover ready to hit the sands.

ERP member Cheryl Sawina drew the name of Financial Services' Linda Canalia as the big winner.

"We definitely see a rise in nominations right after these kick-off parties," said Sawina. "They give everyone a quick break during the work day and get people thinking about nominating fellow employees."



Above: ERP Committee: Don Casella, Nancy Jones, Isaac Eze, Juliet Colebrook, Cheryl Sawina, and Cindy Mabry



Left: Cheryl picks the winning door prize ticket.

Below: Linda Canalia is the lucky winner and is ready for her day at the beach!



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Nuala Forde from the Department of Information Technology commended **Nina Ritson** "for the design of the Connecticut Education Network's new logo. You really captured the essence of the network theme – 'Knowledge at the Speed of Light' - I did not think it would be possible to incorporate the concept of light moving through glass, or fiber optic into the logo but you were able to do it. Thank you again - you have such talent!"

Suzanne Liquerman applauded **Cheryl Sawina** for her "excellent presentation on March 30 for our High School/High Tech site visit... Your leadership, vision and guidance has been invaluable to our continued development and growth, your participation is sincerely appreciated and critical to our business planning.

Sharon Triano-Kott commented on the exceptional service she received from the **SEBAC Reemployment staff**, specifically **Mary Jane O'Brien** and **Jay Tulin**. "During a stressful

hats off

By Cindy Rusczyk

time all questions were answered, researched, and responded to in a timely manner with a great deal of empathy. During the busy days at DAS these two people made a world of difference in my life... As a result of our teamwork, I will commence employment again with DMR as a Case Manager. These extraordinary staff members are working hard to make a difference, and I wanted to share my positive experiences. Thank you."

Commissioner Barbara Waters applauded the **Take Our Kids to Work Day Committee** and helpers and sent the following message: "What a wonderful day for the DAS kids! I cannot thank the committee enough for all of their hard work and creativity (except maybe for those noise balloons in the fishing package!). There was not a second of downtime...I think you all should start a party-planning business! In any event, you made the day for a lot of wonderful little people and their very tired and proud big companions. From all of us, our deepest thanks to the Committee and helpers: **Nancy Jones, Franky Rivera, Marisol Rivera, Kathleen Kabara, Cindy Rusczyk, Mayme Casady, Patsy McLaughlin, Karen Rakowski, Linda Shackett-Blue, Rosemarie Flynn, Isabelle McKinney, Jerry Lynn, Dave Krayeski, Dan Sears, Laura Guilmartin** and **Daughters**."

Paul Felix thanked the **Take Our Kids to Work Day Committee** "for a fun day yesterday. You did a great job organizing the activities for such a large number of kids. We can measure the success by all of the tired adults at the end of the day! Good job!"

Nancy Jones also praised the **Take Our Kids to Work Day Committee** "for making yesterday's event such a big success. I haven't heard anything but good things about yesterday, and from the exhausted looks on everyone's faces, I think we kept everyone very busy!! You're always there when I need you and I wanted you to know how much I appreciate that. I could never do this without you. Till the next event....THANKS!!!

Child Advocate Jeanne Milstein praised **Anil Antani** for providing all of the workers' compensation expenditure information for the Department of Children and Families facilities and regions. "I can't begin to thank you enough for all of your assistance. You have been so helpful, patient and extremely prompt. I appreciate your efforts and hard work."

Aimee Gagnon of DAS' Housing Authority had this to say about the Business Office, "We received a rebate check from an auto insurer and had to find a way to distribute it throughout 41 Housing Authorities. We went to the Business Office for advice, and **Norma Villanueva** and **Mike Felix** saved the day! Not only did they have all the answers, but they were happy to help! It's that kind of experience that makes this agency second to none."

Carol Wilson passed along a word of praise that she received about **Linda LoSchiavo**. "I received a message from Donna Villamil from the Buy Smart...Buy Together Team. She wanted me to know that you were a pleasure to work with, asked intelligent and tough questions and was totally cooperative, responsive and thorough. I agree totally! Thanks for your efforts in working this initiative and the dedication to your job."

Ronna Capozzi from W.F. Kaynor Vocational-Technical School thanked **Jim Gotta** for "his immediate action and subsequent resolution to my problem with Marcus Dairy. It is such a pleasure to work with Jim.

The day that my incident happened with this vendor, Jim was on the phone with Marcus Dairy seeking a resolution. It's great to know that

continued on next page

More Kudos!

people like him are available when we need help. Thanks to your office and Jim for your consideration and prompt action."

Jerry Lynn commended **Cathy Abadom** and **Diane Preble** for "getting all of the DAS P-Card payment corrections all caught up through March 10, 2004. This represents about 2-3 months of on and off efforts to get the monthly P-Card payments corrected retroactive back to June 11, 2003 to July 10, 2003. This is a really great thing to have taken care of because it provides us with a clearer picture of the funds available for year-end. Please know this process was particularly grueling because of the learning curve involved on Core, the new coding structures, and the amount of work that needed to be corrected. It was a monster effort and they both should be quite proud!"

Heather Tweeddale wrote the following to Martin Anderson praising the work of **Steve Soklow**: "I just want you to know how wonderful Steve has been to me this week. We have been getting statistics together for the speaking points for the Lt. Governor for the Nurse Award, and I asked him if he could run some reports. He was so nice about it. He ran the reports right away and then we needed more reports and ran those right away, never complaining (when he probably should have - because I have been a pain). I just want to let you know how much I appreciate all that he has done for me. It means a lot to me."

Jay Tulin praised **Steve Soklow** for his efforts for the last two months. "I have been working with Steve to try to develop a way to get an ad hoc report from CORE that seemingly

could not be done. He and I discussed the parameters many, many times and it appeared hopeless. Steve never gave up and without my asking would come to me to discuss exactly what I was looking for in response to a report request from one of the unions. Finally, Steve was able to create a query that would give us the information the union was looking for and I strongly feel that he should be acknowledged for his efforts in finding a way to make it happen. Thanks so much Steve!"

Robin Riddlesworth, Dale Greenwood, Michelle Burns and a number of other HR staff expressed their gratitude to **Peter Varhol** "for installing and fixing the ceiling fans and air conditioners in Rooms 404-422 in a very timely fashion. The new fan above the area where Robin and I sit has made a big difference in our comfort level and Robin and I are extremely grateful to have this fan. Thank you Peter for your timely and very courteous service."

Pamela Libby extended her thanks to **Heather Tweeddale** and **Diane Fitzpatrick** "for all your hard work for the Nurse of the Year Ceremony. The event was a success, and you should be proud of the work you did. You made DAS look great in the eyes of both our agency customers and the public. I am proud and honored to work with you. Thanks!!!"

Martin Anderson also expressed his thanks to **Heather** and **Diane**. "I, too, need to express my appreciation of their hard work. These ceremonies have truly meant something in the lives of the recipients, their co-workers, and their families. It all keeps getting better and better every year!"

Jerry Lynn thanked **Joann Bellamo** "for providing the year-end

training. Believe it or not, I think some of this stuff is finally sinking in to make some sense and yesterday's session most definitely helped to connect some things that were not clear to me!!!! In addition, please know I fully grasp the tight time frames you guys are working with to make this all work out, and I do appreciate your efforts to get us all there."

Commissioner Barbara Waters applauded **Joe Prevuznak** and **Andrea Keilty** for their work with this year's legislative session. "I just want to compliment you guys for a great job in this very strange year. I was very concerned that some of the proposed bills would have had a drastic and negative effect on government efficiency and none of those made it through. Thanks so much for your efforts!"

Isabelle McKinney thanked **Juliet Colebrook** for being "so dedicated and conscientious with helping to make the 3rd Annual Taste of DAS a success — and it was an amazing day. It's been great pleasure working and chatting with you and I cannot thank you enough for all the energy that you put into getting the job done; and you prepared delicious home-made dishes. Then you kept your enthusiasm right up to just before mealtime and changed your clothing to your native garb, which was absolutely beautiful. Thank you so much for everything and I look forward to working with you again!!

Isabelle McKinney also thanked **John McKay**, **Cindy Rusczyk** and **Nina Ritson** for their assistance with the Taste of DAS. "As always, I appreciate all that you do to make the Council look so good; and you do it with a willing spirit. Thanks much!"

A world far from silent

You are seated at your desk. You're trying to focus against a background din of fax machines, copiers and water cooler chatter. The phone rings as it has so many times that day. You are annoyed by the noisy interruption, but pause to answer. You chat with the person on the other end until you hear someone's voice calling you into an impromptu meeting.

This workday may be taken for granted by most, but it is not how Barbara Jenec of DAS Financial Services has approached her workday for the last seventeen years.

When Jenec was three years old, her parents discovered that their little girl was deaf since birth. This came at a time when persons with hearing disabilities had few resources available to them. Luckily for her, she lived close by to the Clark School of Northampton, Mass., an elementary through high school facility that approached learning orally - not through the use of sign language. In fact, sign language was *forbidden* at the Clarke School. It was there

Jenec learned to read lips and to speak. At graduation from the Clarke School she was surprised when one of her teachers handed her a National Geographic book which featured a large color photo of Jenec at the age of seven along with another student, followed by an article about the school. She had never known of the article's existence. Ironically, it described the school as breaking into the silent world.

"Some of my co-workers during my seventeen years at DAS asked me to bring the book in. I did not want it to fall apart so I scanned the picture at home and brought the image to work and left it out for people to see."

Anyone would be surprised when first meeting Jenec because she clearly reads every word uttered and speaks quite well in conversation. She explained that not all hearing-impaired persons qualify for this method of instruction. She went on to say that her husband, who is also hearing impaired, was educated at a school that embraces sign language, something she learned from friends after graduation.

When asked if technology has made it easier today, she blossomed while describing the not-yet-available electronic devices that she recently saw at a vendor show in the Expo Center in Hartford. She crusaded further by saying that with the help of the legislature, some of these devices could be made more readily available to persons with hearing disabilities through funding. One of her



FSC's Barbara Jenec

favorites was the CapTel telephone by Sprint, which does not utilize TTY (TTD) technology, but allows the user to speak into the phone and read the transcribed message from the caller. This device goes for about \$600. She also has her eye on a DVD TV that can be a "viewer telephone." The caller is seen on the TV screen allowing the user to read lips or sign.

Loss of hearing has not set Jenec back when it comes to her game at

up close

By Nina Ritson

the bowling lanes, she reports. Both she and her husband enjoy bowling in a league in Newington. "I had surgery on my shoulder a few years ago....THAT slowed my game down a little," she smiled.

Aside from her full day at DAS, Friday nights at the bowling lanes, she likes to sell Avon products and do some crocheting. On a sentimental note, she and her husband will be celebrating their 30th wedding anniversary on March 22 this coming year.

Barbara Jenec's world is far from silent!



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Eager Youngsters Seek Knowledge to Open the Gates of Silence
Page 185, lower: A Clarke School pupil learns early that he must ask not least for things he wants. Teachers encourage the children to talk and provide experiences for them to talk about. Excursions about Northampton create the opportunity to learn lessons. Here Paul Feltus selects the right picture to illustrate each sentence in his reading lesson to teacher Shirley Remmes and classroom Barbara Bazzey watch his work.

DAS Hosts Third Annual Nurse of the Year Awards

By John McKay

Flowers and fond wishes filled Room 310 in the State Capitol for the third annual State Nurse of the Year Awards Ceremony hosted by DAS.

The chatter and excitement expressed by the crowd almost drowned out the noise of the special session being held that day – almost.

Eleven finalists and their friends, family and coworkers crammed the room on the hottest day since last summer to see who would take home the final honor of State Nurse of the Year.

Deputy Commissioner Alan Mazzola emceed the event and said, “After the Department of Administrative Services hosted a nursing summit three years ago addressing the state’s nursing shortage, it came to our attention that there was no formal recognition process for our dedicated state nurses. Commissioner Barbara Waters and her staff – most of who are here today – got the idea for this event. Today, I’m happy to emcee our third ceremony with the promise of many more to come.”

Pinch-hitting for Lt. Governor Jodi Rell, who was called away on a family matter, was Laura Cox Dzurec, Dean and Professor at the University of Connecticut.



Deputy Commissioner Alan Mazzola welcomes guests to the Third Annual Nurse of the Year Ceremony on May 11 at the State Capitol.

“Nurses are so critical to our health care system,” she said, “they are care givers, therapists, a friend to talk to and sometimes even family. Where would we be without nurses today?”

Dzurec introduced all eleven finalists before announcing Jeanne Lattanzio as this year’s winner.

Lattanzio has worked as a nurse for the State of Connecticut for the past 33 years. She is Director of Nursing at the UConn Health Center’s John Dempsey Hospital and serves as a faculty member for the University of Hartford and the University of Connecticut Schools of Nursing.

“Clearly, based on the testimony of colleagues and patients she has worked with over a three decade period, Jeanne Lattanzio has made it her business to help people,” Mazzola said. “She is a role model for nurses everywhere, and the State of Connecticut is proud to honor her today.”



Laura Cox Dzurec of the University of Connecticut presents Nurse of the Year Award to Jeanne Lattanzio.

Suitcases for Kids

By Cindy Rusczyk

With so many employees carrying suitcases, it looked like half of DAS was moving out of town!

But the luggage was packed with nothing but good will, as the DAS family once again showed its generosity for a worthy cause, "Suitcases for Kids."

The intent of this national initiative is to collect suitcases for the state's 6,000 children in foster care who have only plastic garbage bags in which to pack all their possessions when they change homes.

DAS folks donated close to 100 suitcases, duffle bags, and backpacks, and made financial contributions during the two-week-long effort.

"Suitcases for Kids" made headlines as state and local officials kicked off the program earlier this month in East Hartford Mayor Tim Larson's office. Deputy Commissioner Alan Mazzola, along with representatives from the Office of the Child Advocate and the Department of Children and Families, attended the event.

"When we were first contacted and heard about the situation of kids moving from place to place, having to carry all their belongings in garbage bags, you realize that's a humiliating thing to have to do," said Mazzola.

The idea would be to have every state social worker working with children in 'residential care' to keep a set of luggage in the trunk of their state car.

Suitcases for Kids was created in 1995 by 10 year-old Aubyn Burnside of Hickory, North Carolina. When Aubyn learned that children in foster care move three to four times and

carry their belongings in black garbage bags, she felt she had to do something. So, she launched the first campaign to collect used luggage for foster children, and "Suitcases for Kids" was born. Now in it's sixth year, Suitcases for Kids is an international nonprofit organization with chapters in every state as well as nine foreign countries.

"We often take for granted how important something as simple as a suitcase or a duffle bag can be, especially to a child who has little else," Mazzola said. He explained that DAS is helping the effort by providing storage for the suitcases



DAS employees contributed nearly 100 suitcases

in the Wethersfield Surplus Property location. Linda Hubeny and Cindy Rusczyk are the DAS coordinators and may be reached at 713-5196 if employees wish to make any additional donations.

Going once, going twice...

DAS auctions rake in the \$\$\$

By Adam Liegeot

Two DAS auctions in two weeks recently raised over \$600,000 for the state's General Fund. The April 24 property auction raised \$47,912, while a May 8 vehicle auction sold off 205 lots and raised \$569,655.

The property auction was notable because thousands of adult beverages were up for bid. Officials from the Liquor Control division of Connecticut's Department of Consumer Protection had confiscated 30 cases of Smirnoff Vodka, 65 cases of Popov Vodka, 4,500 Famous Grouse Scotch nips, 7,000 Brandy nips, 68 cases of Cinzano

Vermouth, and 124 cases of wine and port. Bidding proved to be "spirited" for those items, raising \$10,690. The money was deposited into Consumer Protection's general fund account. The auction, which lasted approximately 60 minutes, was by all accounts a happy hour.

Sixty Ford Crown Victorias drew the attention of bidders at the vehicle auction. The Crown Victorias were from model years 1998 through 2000. In addition, Dodge Intrepids, Plymouth Neons, Ford Tauruses, Ford Escorts, Chevy Blazers, Jeep Cherokees, and mini vans were sold off.

In the 2004 fiscal year, DAS vehicle auctions have raised \$2,208,376.

Taste of DAS is a pleasure for the palate!

By Nina Ritson

A patchwork of mouth-watering aromas from many cultures wafted throughout the S.O.B once again Tuesday, May 19 for the welcome return of the Taste of DAS.

"This was my first Taste of DAS, and I can't wait for the next one!" rejoiced Adam Liegeot of the Communications Office. DAS folks paraded throughout the 5th floor dressed in their native or ancestral attire, while background music from around the world added to the festive ambience.

And food? ...was there ever!!! Both Mechanical rooms were jam packed with huge pans of savory fare from the United States to the Ukraine.

The journey through this bountiful buffet began on the 5th floor east with empanadas and cheese straws and an olive tray with cheeses.

Then we were drawn into the South Mechanical for a three-wall spread of different pasta, meatballs, sausage and peppers, kapusta, chana, rice dishes, manicotti, stuffed cabbage, pastelon de platano, beef stroganoff, collard greens, and curried chicken to name just some of the dishes.

As if that wasn't enough, there was a cold salad table with macaroni and potato

salads, green salads and crock pots brimming with extraordinary recipes.

"I'm stuffed!" could be heard from many, but it was usually followed by "Check out the desserts!"

So we headed to the North Mechanical for the grand sweet tooth finale - lemon cake, rhubarb bread, German apple cake, canolies, Italian cookies, Irish soda bread, Hungarian sugar cookies and - Raguolis. Teresa Dupont modeled her ancestral Lithuanian dress, carrying photos of her family's time-honored tradition of making Raguolis, a cookie cake that stands a few feet tall and requires between 60 to 120 eggs depending on the size baked. Her family has been making this cake for several generations using the original Lithuanian recipe.

Cuisine from every continent...from kapusta to canolies to curried chicken...was there for the tasting. All in all a wonderful day...loaded with carbs...but even higher in camaraderie!

Once again, congratulations to the Diversity Council team and the employees at DAS for another event - tastefully done!

Juliet Colebrook (top), Franky Rivera and Teresa Dupont are well-dressed for the occasion!



...our strength is in our differences





Diversity Council Chair Isabelle McKinney offered special words of thanks to those who worked so hard:

Diversity Council members:
 Commissioner Barbara Waters
 Vin Lombardo
 Maureen Friedman
 Laura Guilmartin
 Jay Tulin
 Carlos Kebe
 Cheryl Drolet
 Tracie Knapsack
 Pamela Libby
 Sammy Thompson

A special thanks goes out to the food coordinators. They were absolutely phenomenal — not only did they coordinate the food contributions and energized our co-workers, but many assisted tirelessly right up to and through clean-up at the end of the event which was a huge task. They are:

Juliet Colebrook
 Sonji Fonseca
 Franky Rivera
 Audrey Pinette
 Laura Guilmartin
 Cindy Rusczyk
 Arlene Watson
 Ann Galbert
 Dave Lynn
 Julie Bernosky
 Deb Atkinson
 Sammy Thompson
 Jose' Rivera
 Teresa Dupont

Peter Varhol was right there with us doing whatever needed to be done; he set-up/organized furniture in the two large conference rooms; and at times he was doing two things at once!

Nina Ritson and John McKay were right there with us as well whenever we called upon Communications for their help and expertise.

There were so many employees that lend a helping hand that I just cannot name them all—the folks that formed the balloon assembly line that pulled their team together and arranged the beautiful balloon bouquets that adorned the aisles of the fifth floor.

Lastly, there were many that started early in morning helping with decorating, setting the tables, receiving the food-stuff, greeting visitors, and assisting with the final clean-up.

THANK YOU ALL!!!



Until Next Year...

Ciao, Au revoir, Adios,
Auf Wiedersehen, Dovidanya,
Shalom, Se do bheatha

Bye-Bye!!

